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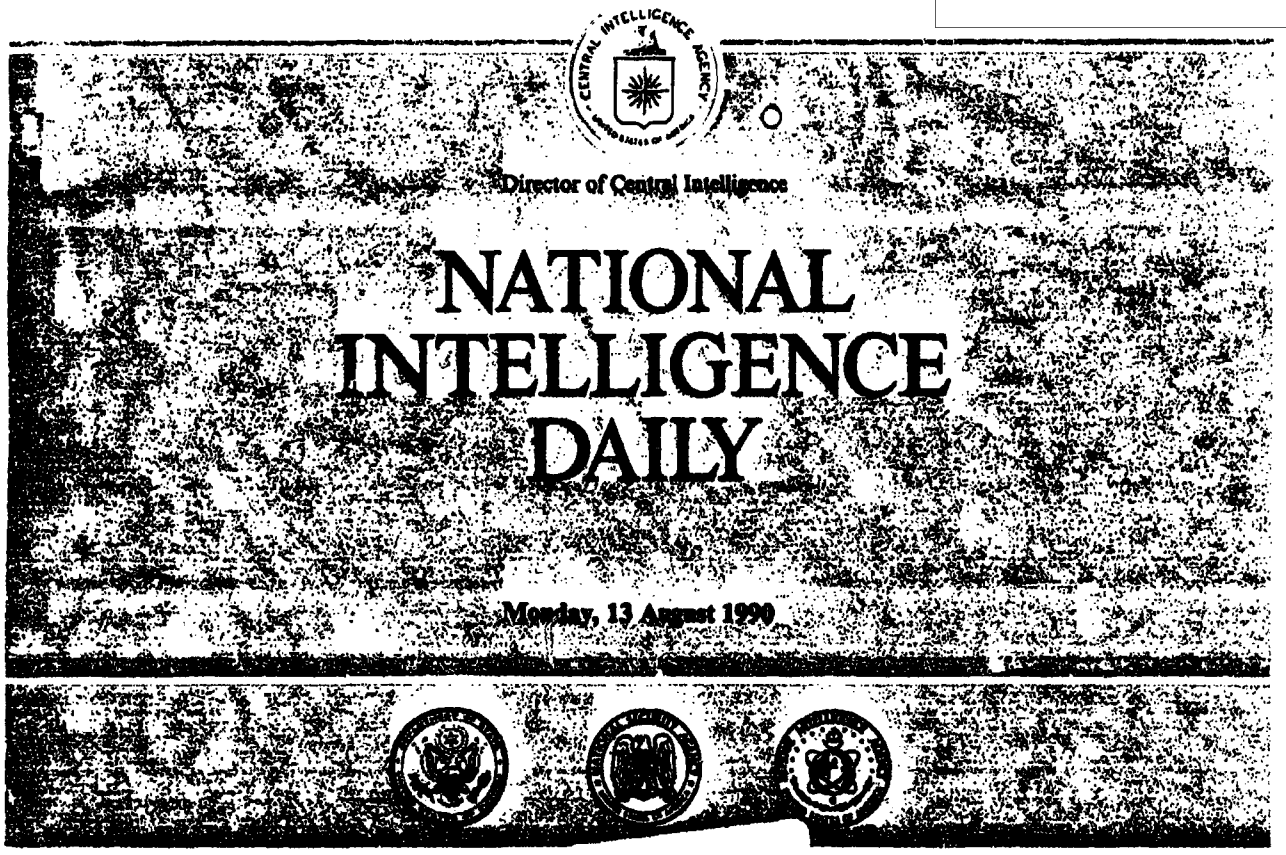

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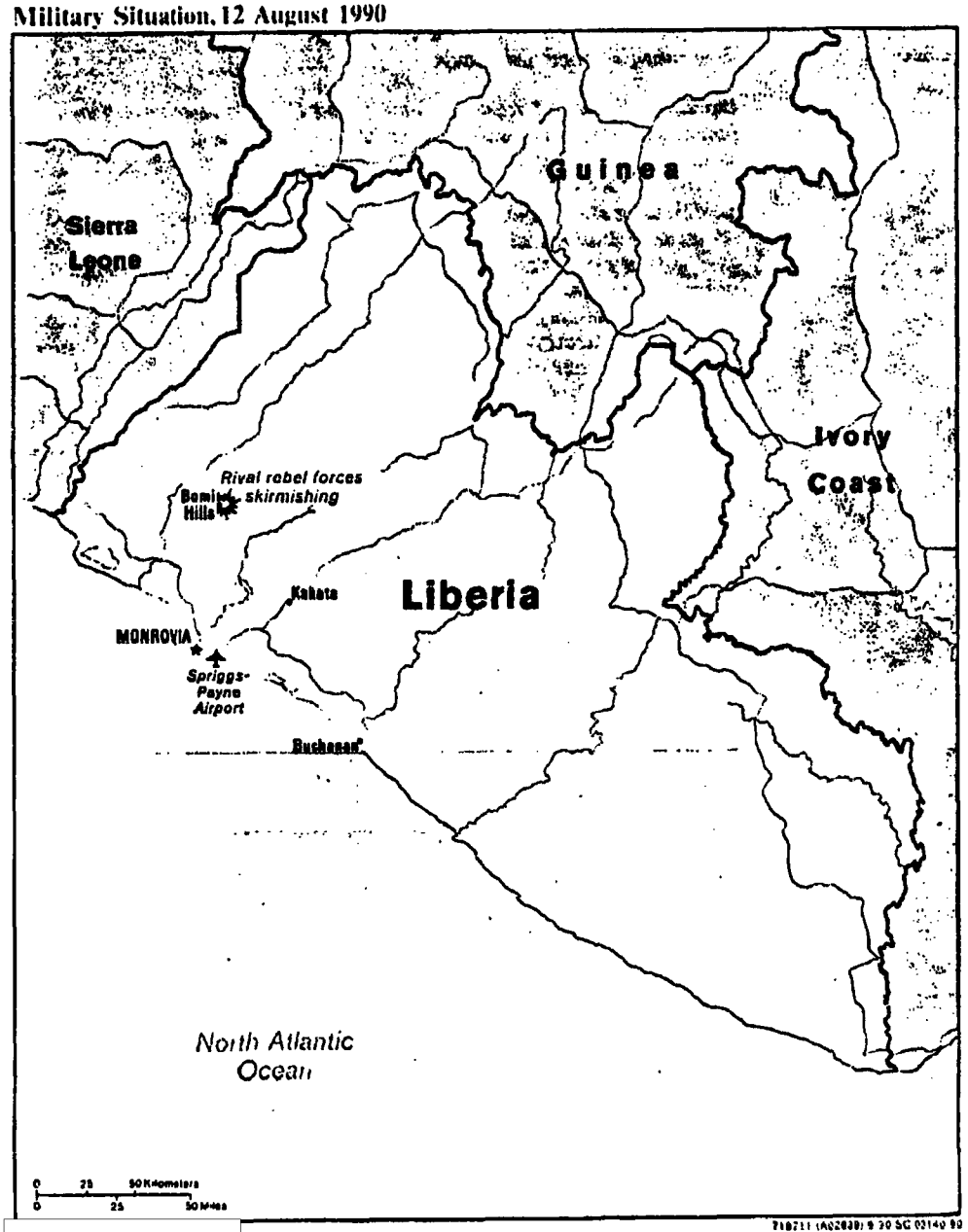

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LIBERIA: Foreign Nationals Evacuated

About 400 foreign nationals—including some US citizens and about 300 Nigerians—safely evacuated Monrovia yesterday. Rebels loyal to Charles Taylor escorted the group to Kakata; tomorrow they will go to Buchanan for evacuation to Freetown by elements of the US naval task force. The government has accused the American relief worker it detains of subversive activities. The military positions of the three rival forces in the capital remain unchanged despite continued heavy fighting. (b)(1)

Meanwhile, 120 Nigerian combat troops and military vehicles arrived by air on Saturday in Freetown; this is the first contingent of the estimated 2,500-man peacekeeping force; a second contingent, 1,000 Ghanaians, is expected to arrive by sea today. (b)(3)

(b)(3)

Comment: Taylor probably hopes his assistance to foreign nationals—especially the Nigerians—will gain him good will, despite his adamant rejection of the peacekeeping contingent. Although Taylor's rebels continue the battle to capture entry points such as Spriggs-Payne Airport in order to deny access of the peacekeeping force to the city, ongoing skirmishes with the army and Johnson's rebels continue to bog down his effort. (b)(3)

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